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Denton sees Soviet menace, tries to spike it

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WASHINGTON — Sen. Jeremiah Denton, an Alabama Republican and ardent anti-Communist, is cranking up his new terrorism subcommittee for hearings next week that are apparently inspired by "The Spike," a novel about Soviet deception of the Western press.

The prospect of Denton providing a congressional forum for charges that the Soviet Union regularly feeds the Western news media with "disinformation" has already aroused private ridicule that he has embarked on a far-right tangent, as well as concern that he may be reviving McCarthyism on Capitol Hill.

"Denton believes 'The Spike,'" said one Democratic senator who asked for anonymity. "He has concluded that the press is advertently and inadvertently in league with the Communists... He believes the United States news media gets disinformation and he's going to hold hearings and investigate how the American press has been duped by Communist propaganda."

Neither Denton nor his subcommittee counsel, Joel Lisker, responded to inquiries from The Globe concerning the hearings.

A subcommittee aide said yesterday that the hearings were scheduled for April 23-24 and that the list of witnesses had not yet been completed. The official subject of the hearings is "Terrorism: Origins, Direction and Support," but the aide said they would concentrate on "disinformation."

Sources familiar with the hearings said Denton was considering calling the authors of "The Spike," Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss, to tes-

author of "The Terror Network," a new book that asserts the Soviets are prime sponsors of international terrorism, and John Barron, author of "KGB," a book about the Soviet intelligence force.

One source said Denton was also interested in calling a psychologist who would testify about the "ulterior motives" of newspapers that juxtapose negative stories with articles involving conservative causes.

Denton's sudden burst of activity on the anti-Communist front comes after a three-month period in which he kept relatively quiet after his arrival in the Senate.

The two previous meetings of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, which was created by the new Republican majority and is headed by Denton, were routine.

But sources say that in recent weeks Denton has shown increased interest in using the subcommittee to investigate Communists.

According to sources, Denton proposed to subpoena the leaders of a forthcoming "March on Washington" to protest US involvement in El Salvador. Denton was said to have wanted to determine before the May 3 demonstration what groups were behind the march.

National Park Service records show a group identified as the "People's Anti-War Mobilization" has applied for a permit to demonstrate in Washington that day, but little else is known of it.

Denton was persuaded to drop his plans after he learned that his subcommittee had no authority to enforce the subpoenas, sources say. A spokesman in Denton's office said the senator would be "monitoring" the march anyway.

surprising from a man who was held prisoner of war in Vietnam for seven years and who was elected last fall with the strong support of the Moral Majority.

However, some Democrats say they are troubled by the possibility that the investigation may turn into a witch-hunt reminiscent of the era of Sen. Joseph McCarthy, and they also say they are concerned over the presence of Lisker as Denton's chief aide on the subcommittee.

Lisker, a former FBI agent, was the Justice Department official responsible for the investigation into the relationship between Billy Carter and Libya last year.

According to a former Justice Department official during the Carter Administration, Lisker also had access — as a member of the department's Internal Security Section — to information gathered from investigations of national security leaks.

A number of investigations of leaks have been carried out, the former official said, but few cases have been considered worthy of prosecution.

There is now concern among career officers at the Justice Department, the former official said, that Denton and Lisker may try to subpoena these old case files in connection with investigations of news leaks and "disinformation" by the subcommittee.

"Lisker certainly knows what's in those files," the source said.

Meanwhile, a coauthor of "The Spike" helped set the stage for Denton's "disinformation" hearings with an article in Tuesday's edition of the Washington Post responding to criticism of the book by a Post columnist, Stephen S. Rosenfeld.

"The KGB's 'dysinformatsiya' department was elevated to a full directorate of the Soviet secret service in 1968," de Borchgrave wrote. "Since then, it has averaged more than 600 operations a year in the Western media — Western Europe, Japan, the United States and friendly Third World countries. Much of this work is done through proxy services, such as the Cuban DGI intelligence."

"Rosenfeld says that Moss and I should name names. Does